

4.3 22/03395/HOUSE

Revised expiry date 3 April 2023

Proposal: Installation of 20 solar PV Panels on roof of two outbuildings.

Location: Parris House, 16 - 18 High Street, Cowden Edenbridge Kent TN8 7JG

Ward(s): Cowden & Hever

### **Item for decision**

The application has been referred to Development Control Committee by Councillor Dickins in order for the impact of the proposal on the Conservation Area and Heritage Impacts to be considered.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That planning permission be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1) The installation of the solar panels onto two curtilage listed structures, would result in harm to their character, integrity and appearance. The works would also have an adverse impact upon the setting of the listed building. As such the proposal would neither conserve nor enhance the heritage assets, but cause harm, which is not outweighed by any public benefit. The proposal would be contrary to policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan and National Planning Policy Framework.

2) The installation of the solar panels, by virtue of their location would disrupt wider views across the Conservation Area and the adjacent public footpath which would stand incongruous and domestic in contrast to the appearance of these outbuildings and therefore, would neither conserve nor enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposal would be contrary to policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Plan and National Planning Policy Framework.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

In dealing with this application we have implemented the requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant/agent in a positive, proactive and creative way by offering a pre-application advice service; as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible and if applicable suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome. We have considered the application in light of our statutory policies in our development plan as set out in the officer's report.

### **Description of site**

- 1 The site consists of a Grade II listed building with several curtilage listed outbuildings on site and a detached garage.
- 2 The dwelling is sited directly on the high street.
- 3 The site lies within the Cowden Conservation Area, Metropolitan Green Belt and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

### **Description of proposal**

- 4 Installation of 20 solar PV Panels on roof of two outbuildings.

### **Relevant planning history**

- 5 93/00543/HIST (LBC) Erection of a detached garage GRANT
- 6 93/00544/HIST Erection of a detached garage GRANT
- 7 05/01541/LBCALT Conversion of existing barn for residential use ancillary to the main dwellinghouse. GRANT
- 8 05/01543/FUL Conversion of existing barn for residential use ancillary to the main dwellinghouse. GRANT
- 9 08/02884/LBCALT Alterations to internal partition and replacement of all windows on front elevation. GRANT
- 10 88/01819/HIST Two storey extension GRANT
- 11 88/01820/HIST Two storey extension GRANT
- 12 12/00073/HOUSE Rebuild/reposition existing wall and brick pier adjacent to entrance gates. GRANT
- 13 12/00074/LBCALT Rebuild/reposition existing wall and brick pier adjacent to entrance gates. GRANT
- 14 12/01414/LBCALT Removal of paint finish to external brickwork to part of front elevation including repointing. GRANT
- 15 12/02755/HOUSE Demolition of existing garage and wood store and erection of new double garage including modification to existing driveway. GRANT
- 16 15/03287/LBCALT Installation of two Air Source Heat Pumps. GRANT

- 17 15/03848/HOUSE Installation of two Air Source Heat Pumps. One located to the rear of the main house, the other located to the rear of the outbuilding. GRANT
- 18 79/00709/HIST Demolition of existing garage, internal and external alterations, conversion and use of shop building for additional living accommodation and construction of dormer window at rear. GRANT
- 19 79/00534/HIST Removal of existing and formation of larger window at rear of dwelling. GRANT
- 20 79/00531/HIST Alterations, conversion and use of existing shop building for additional living accommodation ancillary to existing dwellinghouse, and construction of dormer window at rear. GRANT
- 21 78/01602/HIST Removal of existing external door on west elevation and the fixing of a new timber window. GRANT
- 22 78/01139/HIST Construction of dormer window at rear and formation of window in gable end at side of dwelling. GRANT

## Policies

- 23 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 24 Core Strategy (CS)
  - LO1 Distribution of Development
  - SP1 Design of New Development and Conservation
- 25 Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP)
  - EN1 Design Principles
  - EN2 Amenity Protection
  - EN4 Heritage Assets
  - EN5 Landscape
  - T2 Vehicle Parking
- 26 Other
  - Sevenoaks Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
  - Conservation Area Appraisals - Cowden
  - Development in the Green Belt SPD
  - High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

## Constraints

- 27 The following constraints apply:
  - Cowden Conservation Area
  - Listed Building
  - Metropolitan Green Belt

- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - High Weald

## Consultations

### 28 Cowden Parish Council

‘Cowden Parish Council recommended approval on the basis that:-

- The size of the proposed solar array is reasonably matched to the KWh requirement of the property and that future increase is restricted
- The proposal complies with relevant local and national policies’

### 29 Conservation Officer

Parris House is a grade II listed building within the Cowden Conservation Area. It also sits within the setting of several other listed buildings. The outbuilding to the north-west closest to the house (the barn) is shown on 19th century maps and was converted to residential ancillary use in 2005. There is also a building the west near the road frontage shown on 19th century maps (site of current tool shed/log store). It is these two outbuildings to which it is proposed to attach the solar panels.

30 The Heritage, Design and Access Statement states that the house is a 16th century grade II listed house within the Cowden High Street. The Heritage Statement only identifies the main house as the ‘heritage asset’. It does not refer to the other heritage assets affected by the proposals- namely the Cowden Conservation Area, the curtilage listed barn, the seemingly curtilage listed tool shed (unless this is a recent rebuild) and the setting of nearby listed buildings. The Heritage Statement therefore fails to identify the heritage assets affected by the proposals.

31 Paragraph 194 of the NPPF sets out that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. In this case, this requires an assessment of the significance of the host listed building, nearby listed buildings and the Conservation Area that may be impacted by the development through change within their setting, as well as an assessment of the significance of the two outbuildings as curtilage listed buildings.

32 From my own assessment, the barn appears to be of heritage significance and has greater prominence in the setting of the heritage assets identified and so the installation of the solar panels on this building is unlikely to be supportable due to the impact this would have on both the barn itself and the setting of the nearby heritage assets. Further information is required to assess the acceptability on the tool shed.

- 33 The garage also appears to be a modern addition and it is not clear why this hasn't been considered as a more sympathetic location. Without the information identified above I am unable to determine the impact of the development on heritage assets and the harm that would arise to their significance through the proposals. Based on the information provided, the solar panels would be installed on curtilage listed buildings and would cause less than substantial harm to their heritage significance, as well as the setting of the other heritage assets identified in my comments above.
- 34 The proposals are therefore not supported when assessed against the relevant NPPF policies or local policy EN4.

### Representations

- 35 Two public comments were received in support of the application.

### Chief Planning Officer's appraisal

- 36 The main planning consideration are:
- Design and impact on the character and appearance of the area
  - Impact on neighbouring amenity
  - Impact on the Conservation Area
  - Impact on Listed Buildings and their Setting
  - Impact on the Green Belt
  - Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
  - Impact on highways safety and parking provision
- 37 Design and impact on the character and appearance of the area  
Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy and policy EN1 of the ADMP state that all new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to and respect the character of the area in which it is situated.
- 39 The solar panels on the barn would not be visible from the street scene. The panels on the tool shed would only be partially visible from certain vantage points on the street scene. They are of a typical size and design for solar panels for domestic use. The solar panels on both buildings would be visible from a public footpath however would not impede the use of said footpath.
- 40 No materials are necessary other than the solar panels themselves.
- 41 Overall, the proposal is not considered as harmful to the character and appearance of the area and is considered to accord with policies SP1 of the Core Strategy and EN1 of the ADMP.
- 42 Impact on neighbouring amenity  
Policy EN2 of the ADMP requires proposals to safeguard the amenities of existing and future occupants of nearby properties.

- 43 When considering the siting and scale of the proposed solar panels in relation to the adjoining neighbouring properties, the proposal would not be considered to pose a harmful loss of light, outlook or privacy to neighbouring properties.
- 44 As such, the proposal is not considered to be harmful to neighbouring amenity, in accordance with policy EN2 of the ADMP.
- 45 Impact on the Conservation Area  
Policy EN4 of the ADMP states that proposals that affect a Heritage Asset, or its setting, will be permitted where the development conserves or enhances the character, appearance and setting of the asset.
- 46 The application site is located within the Cowden Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal for the Cowden Conservation Area states that Parris House is a building which contributes positively to its character.
- 47 Both outbuildings are also located within the Conservation Area.
- 48 The solar panels are located on roof slopes facing away from the property and the high street however, the solar panels will be highly visible from the adjacent public footpath that runs along the southern boundary of the site and wider views from the site. Due to the size, central location on the plot and existing appearance of the barn, the proposed addition of solar panels would appear in stark domestic contrast to its existing appearance in the Conservation Area and therefore, disrupt visually appealing long range views within it.
- 49 Similarly, the addition of solar panels on the tool shed, which is located directly adjacent to the public footpath and highly visible from it, would once again disrupt and replace views and the appearance of historic outbuildings from within the Conservation Area with incompatible 'alien' features.
- 50 The proposals do not contribute to the enhancement of the character and appearance of the area but rather change the visual appearance of historic outbuildings. As a result, the proposal would not be considered to either conserve or enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to policy EN4 of the ADMP.
- 51 Impact on Listed Buildings and their Setting  
Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on a local planning authority, in considering development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses.
- 52 The NPPF states that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets (para.199).

- 53 The NPPF also states that sufficient and proportionate information should be provided with any application to help in determining applications (para. 200).
- 54 Policy EN4 of the ADMP states that proposals that affect a Heritage Asset, or its setting, will be permitted where the development conserves or enhances the character, appearance and setting of the asset.
- 55 The solar panels would be located on the west facing roof slope of the barn and the flat roof and south facing roof slope of the tool shed. Both the barn and tool shed are curtilage listed structures, as they have been constructed prior to 1948 and therefore afforded the same protection as the main listed building. The barn has been identified by Conservation as being of particular heritage significance and has great prominence in the setting of the main listed Parris House.
- 56 The Heritage, Design and Access Statement also lacks sufficient information and assessment of the impact that the proposal will have upon all heritage assets.
- 57 The installation of the solar panels will cause harm to the curtilage listed structures, due to their appearance, siting and alien features on these historic outbuildings. The proposal would harm their heritage significance. Under para 202 of the NPPF, the proposal would result in less than substantial harm. Such harm can only be outweighed if there is public benefit, such as securing its future use. However in these cases, the barn and tool shed are already in use. The siting of solar panels on these curtilage listed structures does not secure the buildings future use. Whilst the provision of renewable energy is clearly a benefit, in this case, it is only benefitting the applicant, not the wider public. Therefore there is no public benefit arising from this scheme.
- 58 Based on the information provided, the solar panels would be installed on curtilage listed buildings and would cause less than substantial harm to their heritage significance and harm the setting of the main listed building. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to policy EN4 of the ADMP.
- 59 Impact on the AONB  
The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 states that the Local Planning Authority should conserve and enhance Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. A failure to achieve both of these points will result in a conflict with the requirements of the Act.
- 60 Policy EN5 of the ADMP states that the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and their settings will be given the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Proposals within the AONB will be permitted where the form, scale, materials and design will conserve and enhance the character of the landscape and have regard to the relevant Management Plan and associated guidance.

- 61 The proposed work does not result in the construction of built form and the work is located on the roof slopes of existing outbuildings and therefore, the landscape of the AONB would be conserved.
- 62 The use of renewable energy sources would help to contribute to reducing emissions as per para.152 of the NPPF states we should support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure and even small scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions. In this instance, the proposed development contribute to the provision of green energy without harming AONB space.
- 63 As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with policy EN5 of the ADMP.
- 64 Impact on highways safety and parking provision  
No adverse impact or changes would arise to highways safety by the installation of these panels. The proposal would remain compliant with T2 of the ADMP.

### **Other Issues**

- 65 Impact on the Green Belt  
The proposed installation of the solar panels on the existing buildings, within the residential curtilage of a dwellinghouse will not harm the openness of the Green Belt.

### **Conclusion**

- 66 In conclusion, the proposal would be contrary to policy EN4 due to the harm that would occur to the significance of curtilage listed buildings and the setting of the main listed building and wider views within the Cowden Conservation Area.
- 67 As highlighted in the report above the proposed development does not accord with the NPPF and our adopted development plan.

It is therefore recommended that this application is refused.

### **Background Papers** Site and Block Plan

Contact Officer(s):

Stephanie Payne: 01732 227000

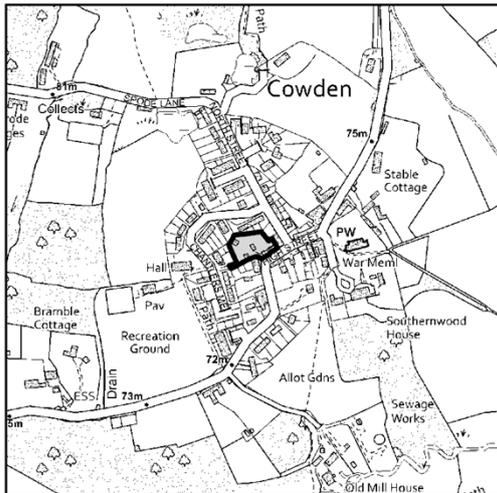
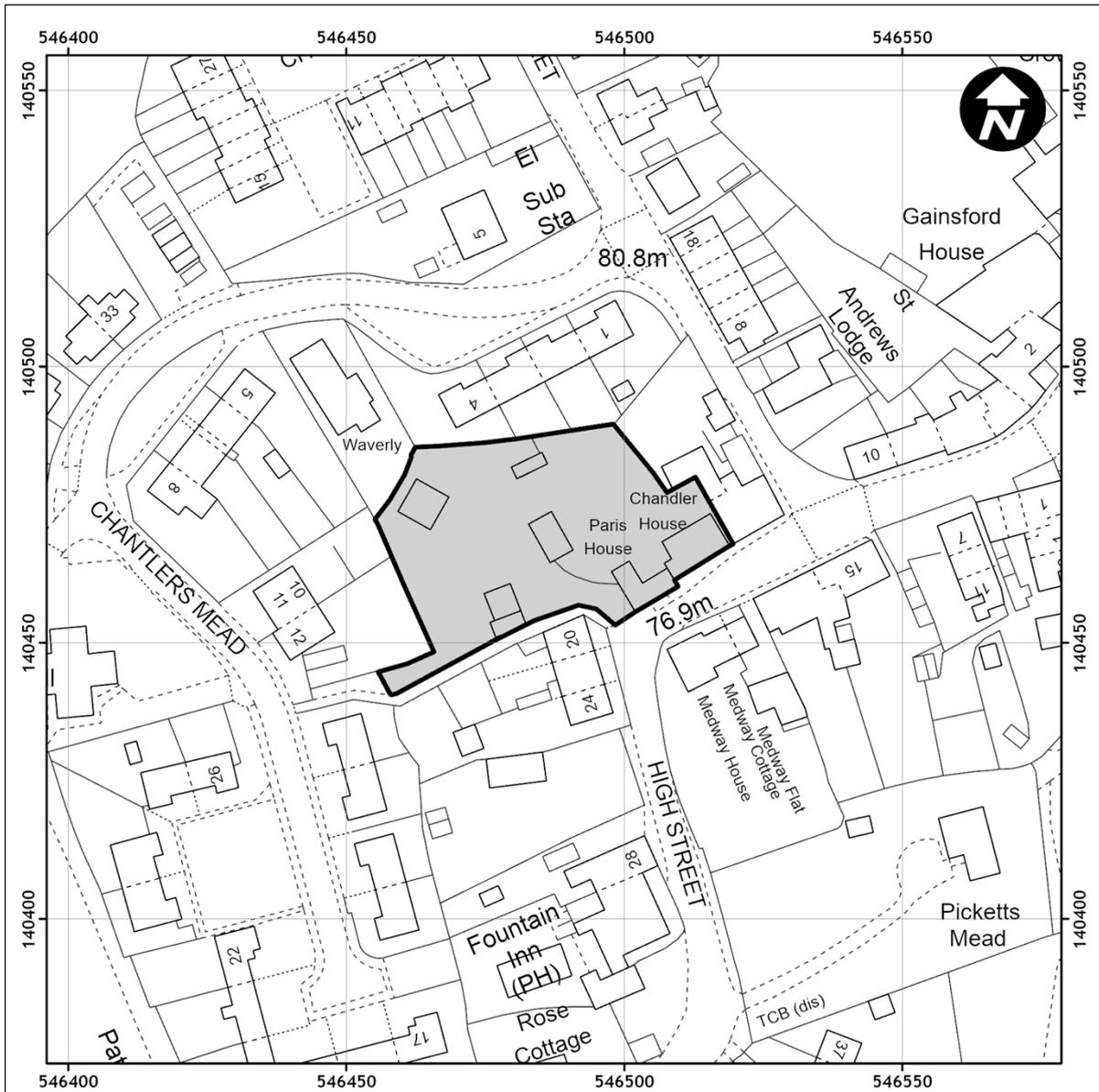
**Richard Morris**  
Chief Planning Officer

Link to application details:

<https://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>

Link to associated documents:

<https://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=RMJ5OLBKH8K00>



# Site Plan

Scale 1:1,250

Date 03/03/2023

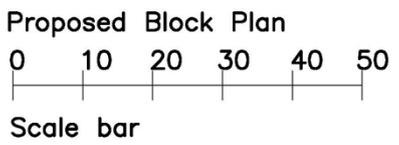


© Crown copyright and database rights 2023  
Ordnance Survey 100019428.

# BLOCK PLAN



Note: Do not scale from this drawing EXCEPT FOR PLANNING USE. The site boundaries approximately reflect the fence lines on site and have not been accurately checked against the Land Title Plan. A detailed and accurate land survey has not been carried out in the production of this drawing.  
 This scheme is diagrammatic and for Planning Use only. No checks/survey/search has been carried out on the site to identify existing services, pipes/levers or any other potential legal restriction or hazards.  
 This scheme is for Planning use only and therefore all noted floor areas and room dimensions are approximate.



M.R. Garland Limited  
 4 Batts Hill Cottages Horsenden Road  
 Brentley Kent TN12 7AT  
 01892 724 542 or 07802 987 698  
 mrgarlandlimited@btinternet.com

Client	
Mr M Clark	
Project	
Parris House High Street Cowden Kent	
Drawing Title	
Proposed Block Plan	
Date	Drawing No. Rev.
November 2022	M22-9876:06
Scale	
1:5000 A3	